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## Attitudes to English job titles in the Netherlands and Flanders

*Different because of different historical and sociolinguistic circumstances?*

Frank van Meurs, Berna Hendriks & Dirk Sanders

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### Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate if English loanwords are perceived differently in Flanders and the Netherlands, two areas with a shared official language (Dutch) but different sociolinguistic background and history. It has been argued that because of historical French dominance over Flemish, attitudes towards loanwords in Flanders are negative, whereas in the Netherlands attitudes are more positive because Dutch has not been threatened by another language there. In an experiment with a between-subject design, 155 Dutch and Flemish university students evaluated three equivalent Dutch and English job titles (e.g. *hoofredacteur*/editor-in-chief) with regard to comprehensibility, attractiveness, naturalness, and intention to apply for the job. In addition, general attitudes towards English loanwords were measured. Findings did not reveal differences between the Dutch and Flemish participants in their evaluation of the English versus Dutch job titles, nor in their general attitude towards English loanwords. For both participant groups, there were no differences in attitude towards the English and Dutch versions for two of the job titles, and both groups displayed more positive attitudes towards the Dutch version of one of the job titles than its English equivalent. However, Flemish participants were less likely to apply for jobs with English job titles than for jobs with equivalent Dutch job titles, while for the Dutch participants language of job title did not result in differences in application intention. The general attitude to English loanwords of both Dutch and Flemish participants was positive. It can therefore be concluded that, generally, nationality was not a factor influencing language attitudes.

**Keywords:** loanwords, job titles, English, Dutch, Flanders, Netherlands, purism, language attitudes

# 1 Introduction

English is said to enjoy high prestige in countries where it is a second or foreign language because of its associations with the dominant Anglo-American culture and because of its usefulness as an international language (Kahane, 1992; Latomaa, 1998; Takashi, 1990). The influence of English manifests itself in two ways: firstly, in its widespread use as a *lingua franca* in communication among speakers for whom it is not a first language, and secondly as a source of loanwords for many languages in the world (Zenner et al., 2013).

Reactions to English loanwords range from positive to negative. While loanwords may be used because they seem to carry prestige (Hock, 1986), they may also be received with hostility, because they are felt to be a threat to the native language (Grezel, 2007; Thomas, 1991). Language purists are opposed to loanwords, because they feel these loanwords ‘pollute’ their language. Empirical research has shown that reactions to loanwords may vary among countries. For instance, in the Nordic countries, surveys have revealed that opposition to English loanwords, purism, was much stronger in Iceland and that English loanwords were received much more positively in Denmark (Kristiansen, 2010; Thøgersen, 2004). These attitudinal differences have been linked to more general differences among these countries, for instance with regard to language policy (for example, in Iceland government policy is much more purist than in other Nordic countries). More generally, cultural factors – political, historical, economic and linguistic realities – have been argued to shape language attitudes (Cargile et al., 1994). For instance, Peng et al. (1993) found that Koreans living in Korea, Koreans living in the US and Americans reacted differently to speech rate of Korean and American speakers, which the authors link to cultural differences between Korea and the US in evaluations of pace and age.

The focus of the present study is attitudes towards English loanwords in the Netherlands and Flanders, the northern part of Belgium. The Netherlands and Flanders share an official language, Dutch, but their sociolinguistic background and history is very different. In Belgium, there are three official languages: Dutch, French and German. Dutch is spoken in Flanders, the northern part of Belgium. Until about 1930, the upper classes in Flanders used French, which dominated various aspects of public life (Vandekerckhove, 2005). Since the nineteenth century, there has been a struggle for more linguistic status and rights for Dutch (De Vries et al., 1994, pp. 113-127; Van der Wal and van Bree, 2008, pp. 377-410). Even today, there are tensions between the Dutch- and French-speaking parts of Belgium (Van

Velthoven, 2011). For instance, some inhabitants of Flanders object to the financial support provided to the French-speaking areas (e.g. Belgische Politiek, n.d.). In the Netherlands, Dutch is the official language in the entire country, although Frisian is also an official language in one of its provinces. Unlike in Belgium, in the Netherlands Dutch has no recent history of being dominated by other languages, and there are no tensions between language communities.

Several scholars have argued that attitudes towards loanwords in Flanders are different than in the Netherlands because of these different language situations and history (Cohen, 1996; Geeraerts and Grondelaers, 1999; Van der Sijs, 1996, p. 307; Zenner et al., 2012; Zenner et al., 2013; Zenner et al., 2014; Zenner et al., 2015). They argue that in Flanders, the historic dominance of French over Flemish and the persisting tensions between Dutch- and French-speaking areas lead to negative attitudes towards French loanwords, and to loanwords in general, including English loanwords. Thus, it is argued that in Flanders there may therefore be a felt need for purism, that is, a need to protect the Dutch language against 'foreign influences'. In the Netherlands, unlike in Flanders, Dutch is not under threat from a dominant language such as French, and consequently, there is less of a need to protect the Dutch language. Therefore, in the Netherlands, attitudes to loanwords in general, including English loanwords are said to be less negative or even positive.

However, the same scholars also point out that attitudes to English loanwords in Flanders and the Netherlands may *not* be all that different (Cohen, 1996; Geeraerts and Grondelaers, 1999; Van der Sijs, 1996; Zenner et al., 2012; Zenner et al., 2013; Zenner et al., 2015). The idea behind this is that purism in Flanders is only directed against French loanwords, but not against English loanwords. There may, in fact, not even be a felt need for purism directed against French loanwords in Flanders, as the dominance of French is a thing of the past. In addition, attitudes to English loanwords in Flanders and the Netherlands are argued to be similar because people in both countries are exposed to English in the media to a similar extent. In both countries, for instance, English-language films and TV programmes are subtitled and not dubbed.

Similar to English loanwords in general, English job titles are subject to discussion in the Netherlands and Flanders. It is argued that such job titles are used because they are considered more prestigious than their Dutch counterparts (Peereboom, 1991; Tiggeler and Doeve, 2005). Johnston (2001), for instance, argues that 'An English title would lend certain glamour to a vacancy' [our translation]. At the same time, there is also opposition to

English job titles. They are, for instance, called ‘puffed-up’ [our translation] (Peereboom, 1991), and their use is ridiculed in cartoons (Ampzing Genootschap, 2004; Ballegeer, 5 April 2008). Despite the opposition, English job titles are quite commonly used in both Flanders and the Netherlands. A corpus analysis of 13,000 job ads in a Flemish job ad magazine and a Dutch job ad magazine showed that about 36 per cent contained English job titles (Zenner et al., 2013). This corpus analysis indicated that English job titles were more frequent in job ads in the Netherlands than in Flanders, which may be taken as evidence for the idea that attitudes to English loanwords are more negative in Flanders. The overall pattern showing an increase in the number of English job titles over time was the same in the two countries. This parallel increase may indicate that past differences in attitude between the Netherlands and Flanders persist, but it may also indicate current attitudes are converging, despite differences in the past.

In light of the two opposing views on possible differences in attitudes towards English loanwords between Flanders and the Netherlands, the question is which of these two views accurately reflects current language attitudes in the two countries. The aim of the present study, therefore, is to determine to what extent there are differences in attitudes to English loanwords in Flanders and the Netherlands. More specifically, the purpose was to determine possible differences in attitudes to a particular type of English loanword: English job titles.

## 2 Method

In an experiment using online questionnaires, attitudes towards loanwords among Dutch and Flemish participants were measured in two ways: by asking participants to evaluate Dutch or English job titles (indirect measurement) and by asking them about their attitudes towards English loanwords in general (direct measurement). Both direct and indirect measurements were used, since earlier research (Hassall et al., 2008; Kristiansen, 2010) has shown that participants may express different attitudes towards loanwords depending on whether the measurement was direct or indirect: overt and covert attitudes, respectively.

### 2.1 Design

In an experiment with a 2 (*nationality of participants*: Dutch, Flemish) x 2 (*language of job titles*: English, Dutch) between-subject design, Dutch and Flemish participants evaluated either English job titles or Dutch job titles.

## 2.2 Participants

A total of 155 Dutch and Flemish university students took part in the experiment (81.9% female; mean age = 22.60,  $SD = 1.46$ , range 20 – 28). All participants were students of communication at the universities of Antwerp, Ghent and Louvain in Belgium and the universities of Amsterdam, Eindhoven and Nijmegen in the Netherlands (e.g. communication and information studies, communication management, multilingual communication). All students indicated they were in the final year of their studies; the majority were master students (53.5%). The fact that they were final-year students makes it likely that future career choices such as job application were relevant to them. Participants' self-assessed English proficiency was relatively high for both Dutch ( $M = 3.73$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) and Flemish ( $M = 3.78$ ,  $SD = .61$ ) participants (on a 5-point scale, where 5 was 'like a native speaker'). There were no differences in gender ( $\chi^2(3) = 0.50$ ,  $p = .920$ ), age ( $F(3, 154) = 2.58$ ,  $p = .056$ ), and self-assessed English proficiency ( $F(3, 151) = 2.06$ ,  $p = .108$ ) between the participants in the four experimental conditions, i.e., Dutch students evaluating Dutch job titles, Dutch students evaluating English job titles, Flemish students evaluating Dutch job titles, Flemish students evaluating English job titles. Table 1 displays the number of participants for the four experimental conditions.

Table 1 Distribution of participants over experimental conditions

Nationality of participants	Language of job titles	<i>n</i>
Dutch	English	47
Dutch	Dutch	36
Flemish	English	33
Flemish	Dutch	39
Total		155

## 2.3 Material

The job titles in the current study were selected so as to be relevant to participants, communication students. Therefore, job titles were searched in the 'Communications' section of the most important English-language job site Monster.com (eBizMBA, 2013). More specifically, the job titles selected were for high-level positions that graduates with a degree in communication might aspire to in the future. The three job titles selected were *Head of communications*; *Editor-in-chief* and *Senior communications advisor*. The English job titles were translated into Dutch and back-translated into English by a bilingual Dutch – English university lecturer to see if they

matched the original English job titles (the so-called translation – back translation method; Brislin, 1980). Subsequently, it was checked whether the English and Dutch job titles were used on Dutch and Belgian websites. The titles were found to occur on websites from both countries, but more frequently on Dutch websites (see Table 2 for frequencies).

**Table 2** Frequency of English job titles and Dutch equivalent job titles on Dutch (site.nl) and Belgian (site.be) web pages on 4 November 2016

Job title	No. of web pages site.nl	No. of web pages site.be
Head of communications	4900	3280
Hoofd communicatie	26,700	2030
Senior communications advisor	504	419
Senior communicatieadviseur	16,900	1260
Editor-in-chief	53,800	27,600
Hoofredacteur	1,200,000	270,000

In the main experiment, the participants evaluated either three Dutch job titles or three equivalent English job titles: *Hoofd communicatie* – *Head of communications*; *Hoofredacteur* – *Editor-in-chief*; *Senior communicatieadviseur* – *Senior communications advisor*.

## 2.4 Instrumentation

### 2.4.1 Attitude to the job title

The questionnaire started with a set of open-ended questions about each of the three job titles: 'For each job title, write down what you think about the job title'. The answers were coded as negative (e.g. 'No idea what this means'), neutral (e.g. 'Clear, to the point, but perhaps also slightly too general or too broad') and positive (e.g. 'Clear job title'). As a check on the reliability of the coding, a second coder coded ten per cent of the 459 answers given, in line with recommendations for determining inter-rater reliability in social science research (Neuendorf, 2002). There was 90% agreement between the two coders ( $\kappa = .81, p < .001$ ).

Next, the participants evaluated each of the three job titles separately, on seven-point scales. Participants' opinions about the job title were measured with semantic differentials relating to comprehensibility (I think the job title is incomprehensible – comprehensible, unclear – clear;  $\alpha = .90$  (based on Maes et al., 1996)), attractiveness (I think the job title is unattractive – attractive, unpleasant – pleasant;  $\alpha = .89$  (based on Maes et al.,

1996)), and naturalness (I think the job title is unnatural – natural, awkward – normal;  $\alpha = .88$ ; (based on Van Meurs et al., 2004)).

#### 2.4.2 *Status of the job*

Participants' opinions about the status of the job indicated by the job title were measured with two 7-point semantic differentials ('A job as ... seems to me to have few responsibilities – many responsibilities, to be low level – high level';  $\alpha = .87$  (based on van Meurs et al., 2007)). The *estimated gross salary* for the position was measured with one item: 'A ... earns per month an average gross salary of ...', with seven options ranging between €1000 and €7000 (based on Renkema et al., 2001, Van Meurs et al., 2004).

#### 2.4.3 *Intention to apply for job*

Participants' intention to apply for the job was measured with two 7-point Likert scales: 'I would like to work in the position of ... in the future' and 'In the future, I will send an application letter to the company that offers a vacancy as ...' (completely disagree – completely agree;  $\alpha = .91$ ) (based on Van Meurs et al., 2004).

#### 2.4.4 *General attitudes towards English loanwords*

At the end of the questionnaire, participants' general attitudes were measured with four 7-point Likert-scale items: 'We must avoid the use of English loanwords when a Dutch equivalent is available'; 'English loanwords pollute the Dutch language'; 'English loanwords enrich the Dutch language'; 'English loanwords sound attractive' (totally disagree – totally agree;  $\alpha = .81$ ) (based on Hassall et al., 2008).

#### 2.4.5 *English language proficiency*

Participants' self-assessed English language proficiency was measured with four 5-point semantic differentials based on Luna et al. (2008): 'Indicate how good your English proficiency is in listening, reading, speaking, writing' (very poor – like a native speaker;  $\alpha = .87$ ).

### 2.5 Procedure

The experiment was conducted online using the Qualtrics program. Participants were randomly assigned to either a condition in which they evaluated English job titles or a condition in which they evaluated Dutch job titles. They were asked to evaluate job titles, but were not further informed about the purpose of the study.



## 2.6 Statistical analysis

As valence of opinions was a categorical variable, non-parametric Chi-square tests were used to analyse differences in valence of opinions expressed about the job titles in Dutch and English and between Dutch and Flemish participants. As attitudes, estimated gross salary and application intention were measured as interval variables, repeated measures analyses with nationality of participants and language of job titles as between-subject factors and job title as within-subject factor were conducted to analyse differences in evaluations of English and Dutch job titles by Dutch and Flemish participants. Differences in attitudes to English and Dutch job titles were measured with individual job title as factor because van Meurs et al. (2007) showed that Dutch participants' evaluations of English versus Dutch job titles differed depending on the specific job title that was evaluated. Differences in general attitudes towards English loanwords were analysed with two-way Anovas with nationality of participants and language of the job titles evaluated as factors. One-sample t-tests were carried out to determine if general attitudes towards English loanwords differed significantly from the midpoint of the scale on which they were measured.

## 3 Results

### 3.1 Attitude to the job title

#### 3.1.1 *Open-ended questions: opinions about job titles*

The open-ended questions were analysed in two ways: first by comparing evaluations of Dutch and Flemish students for each of the *languages used in the job title* separately, and secondly by comparing the evaluations of Dutch and English job titles for each *nationality* separately.

A first series of Chi-square analyses compared the valence of opinions expressed about the job titles in the two languages separately. There were no differences between Flemish and Dutch students for the English job titles ( $\chi^2(2) = 0.65, p = .721$ ) nor for the Dutch job titles ( $\chi^2(2) = 1.08, p = .583$ ) (see Table 3).

**Table 3** Comparison of valence of opinions about English and Dutch job titles (number and percentages of opinions expressed)

Valence	English job titles		Dutch job titles	
	Flemish students	Dutch students	Flemish students	Dutch students
Negative	33 (33.3%) <sup>a</sup>	46 (32.6%) <sup>a</sup>	21 (17.9%) <sup>a</sup>	19 (17.6%) <sup>a</sup>
Neutral	34 (34.3%) <sup>a</sup>	55 (39.0%) <sup>a</sup>	59 (50.4%) <sup>a</sup>	48 (44.4%) <sup>a</sup>
Positive	32 (32.3%) <sup>a</sup>	40 (28.4%) <sup>a</sup>	37 (31.6%) <sup>a</sup>	41 (38.0%) <sup>a</sup>
Total	99	141	117	108

*Note:* different superscript letters denote column proportions which differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

A series of more detailed Chi-square analyses compared the valence of opinions for each individual job title and showed that there were no differences between the Flemish and Dutch participants in their evaluations of the three job titles, neither in Dutch nor in English (all  $p$ 's > .359).

A second series of Chi-square analyses compared the valence of opinions about the job titles in English and Dutch expressed for each of the two groups of participants separately. The Dutch students expressed relatively more negative opinions about the English job titles than about the Dutch job titles ( $\chi^2(2) = 7.46, p = .024$ ). The Flemish students also expressed relatively more negative opinions and relatively fewer neutral opinions about English job titles than about Dutch job titles ( $\chi^2(2) = 8.31, p = .016$ ; see Table 4).

**Table 4** Comparison of valence of opinions about job titles expressed by Flemish and Dutch students (number and percentages of opinions expressed)

Valence	Flemish students		Dutch students	
	English job titles	Dutch job titles	English job titles	Dutch job titles
Negative	33 (33.3%) <sup>a</sup>	21 (17.9%) <sup>b</sup>	46 (32.6%) <sup>a</sup>	19 (17.6%) <sup>b</sup>
Neutral	34 (34.3%) <sup>a</sup>	59 (50.4%) <sup>b</sup>	55 (39.0%) <sup>a</sup>	48 (44.4%) <sup>a</sup>
Positive	32 (32.3%) <sup>a</sup>	37 (31.6%) <sup>a</sup>	40 (28.4%) <sup>a</sup>	41 (38.0%) <sup>a</sup>
Total	99	117	141	108

*Note:* different superscript letters denote column proportions which differ significantly from each other at the .05 level.

A series of more detailed Chi-square analyses compared the valence of opinions for each individual job title and showed that the 'Editor-in-chief' job title was the only job title for which the English and Dutch version were evaluated differently by both Flemish ( $\chi^2(2) = 18.65, p < .001$ ) and Dutch participants ( $\chi^2(2) = 9.94, p = .007$ ). Both Flemish and Dutch participants

expressed more negative and fewer positive opinions about the English version than about the Dutch version.

3.1.2 *Attractiveness job title*

Participants indicated how attractive and pleasant they considered the job titles to be on 7-point rating scales (see Table 5). A repeated measures analysis with *language* and *nationality* as between-subject factors and *job title* as within-subject factor revealed a main effect of *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 12.69, p < .001$ ), a main effect of *language* ( $F(1, 151) = 10.11, p = .002$ ) but also significant interactions between *language* and *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 11.20, p < .001$ ) and between *nationality* and *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 3.50, p = .033$ ). Both Flemish and Dutch participants rated the English ‘Editor-in-chief’ job title ( $M = 3.77, SD = 1.63$ ) as significantly less attractive than the Dutch ‘Hoofdredacteur’ ( $M = 5.12, SD = 1.35$ ) ( $F(1, 153) = 31.40, p < .001$ ). In addition, the Flemish students ( $M = 4.60, SD = 1.46$ ) rated the job title of ‘Senior communications advisor’ in both English and Dutch as significantly less attractive than did the Dutch students ( $M = 5.27, SD = 1.31; F(1, 153) = 8.96, p = .003$ ).

**Table 5** Means and standard deviations for attractiveness of job title (1 = low evaluation, 7 = high evaluation)

	Flemish students			Dutch students			Total		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
English job titles									
Editor-in-chief	3.58	1.45	33	3.90	1.75	47	3.77	1.63	80
Head of communications	5.24	1.17	33	5.27	1.30	47	5.26	1.24	80
Senior communications advisor	4.67	1.33	33	5.21	1.33	47	4.99	1.35	80
Total	4.49	1.48	99	4.79	1.59	141	4.67	1.55	240
Dutch job titles									
Hoofdredacteur	5.35	1.27	39	4.88	1.41	36	5.12	1.35	75
Hoofd communicatie	5.18	1.36	39	5.25	1.40	36	5.21	1.37	75
Senior communicatieadviseur	4.55	1.58	39	5.35	1.30	36	4.93	1.50	75
Total	5.03	1.44	117	5.16	1.37	108	5.09	1.41	225

3.2 *Naturalness job title*

Participants indicated how natural and normal they thought the job titles were on 7-point scales (see Table 6). A repeated measures analysis with *language* and *nationality* as between-subject factors and *job title* as within-subject factor revealed a main effect of *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 7.76, p = .001$ ), a main effect of *language* ( $F(1, 151) = 34.96, p < .001$ ), a main effect of *nation-*

ality ( $F(1, 151) = 6.07, p = .015$ ) and a significant interaction between *language* and *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 39.77, p < .001$ ). Both Flemish and Dutch participants rated the English 'Editor-in-chief' job title as significantly less natural ( $M = 3.46, SD = 1.50$ ) than the Dutch 'Hoofdredacteur' ( $M = 5.83, SD = 0.94$ ) ( $t(134.34) = 11.85, p < .001$ ).

Irrespective of the language of the job titles, Dutch participants ( $M = 5.02, SE = .099$ ) thought all job titles were more natural than did Flemish participants ( $M = 4.69, SE = .093$ ).

**Table 6** Means and standard deviations for naturalness of job title (1 = low evaluation, 7 = high evaluation)

	Flemish students			Dutch students			Total		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
English job titles									
Editor-in-chief	3.23	1.39	33	3.63	1.56	47	3.46	1.50	80
Head of communications	5.11	1.01	33	5.12	1.23	47	5.11	1.14	80
Senior communications advisor	4.61	1.25	33	5.03	1.38	47	4.86	1.34	80
Total	4.31	1.45	99	4.59	1.55	141	4.48	1.51	240
Dutch job titles									
Hoofdredacteur	5.92	0.96	39	5.72	0.93	36	5.83	0.94	75
Hoofd communicatie	4.95	1.54	39	5.33	1.22	36	5.13	1.40	75
Senior communicatieadviseur	4.31	1.67	39	5.29	1.17	36	4.78	1.53	75
Total	5.06	1.56	117	5.45	1.12	108	5.25	1.38	225

### 3.3 Comprehensibility job title

Participants indicated how comprehensible and clear they thought the job titles were on 7-point scales (see Table 7). A repeated measures analysis with *language* and *nationality* as between-subject factors and *job title* as within-subject factor revealed a main effect of *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 8.98, p < .001$ ), a main effect of *language* ( $F(1, 151) = 17.75, p < .001$ ), a main effect of *nationality* ( $F(1, 151) = 5.84, p = .017$ ) and significant interactions between *language* and *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 41.01, p < .001$ ) and between *nationality* and *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 4.58, p = .012$ ).

For the 'Editor-in-chief' job title, the English version ( $M = 3.06, SD = 1.62$ ) was felt to be less comprehensible than the Dutch version ( $M = 5.55, SD = 1.25; F(1, 153) = 114.13, p < .001$ ), whereas for the 'Head of communications' job title the English version ( $M = 5.31, SD = 1.33$ ) was felt to be more comprehensible than the Dutch version ( $M = 4.75, SD = 1.67; F(1, 153) = 5.36, p = .022$ ).

Irrespective of language of the job title, both the ‘Head of communications’ (HOC) and the ‘Senior communications advisor’ (SCA) job titles were considered more comprehensible by the Dutch participants (HOC  $M = 5.29$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ; SCA  $M = 5.02$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ) than by the Flemish participants (HOC  $M = 4.74$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ; SCA  $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.50$ ; HOC:  $F(1, 153) = 5.08$ ,  $p = .026$ ; SCA:  $F(1, 153) = 12.20$ ,  $p = .001$ ).

**Table 7** Means and standard deviations for perceived comprehensibility of the job title (1 = low, 7 = high)

	Flemish students			Dutch students			Total		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
English job titles									
Editor-in-chief	3.08	1.69	33	3.05	1.58	47	3.06	1.62	80
Head of communications	4.98	1.46	33	5.53	1.19	47	5.31	1.33	80
Senior communications advisor	4.29	1.45	33	5.05	1.51	47	4.74	1.52	80
Total	4.12	1.72	99	4.55	1.79	141	4.37	1.77	240
Dutch job titles									
Hoofdredacteur	5.76	1.23	39	5.33	1.25	36	5.55	1.25	75
Hoofd communicatie	4.54	1.75	39	4.97	1.57	36	4.75	1.67	75
Senior communicatieadviseur	4.14	1.55	39	4.99	1.29	36	4.55	1.48	75
Total	4.81	1.66	117	5.10	1.37	108	4.95	1.53	225

### 3.4 Status of job

Participants evaluated the status of the job on two 7-point rating scales (as having few/many responsibilities and low/high level; see Table 8). A repeated measures analysis with *language* and *nationality* as between-subject factors and *job title* as within-subject factor revealed a main effect of *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 25.50$ ,  $p < .001$ ), a main effect of *language* ( $F(1, 151) = 15.38$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and a significant interaction between *language* and *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 14.49$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Both Flemish and Dutch participants rated the English ‘Editor-in-chief’ job title as having significantly less status ( $M = 5.19$ ,  $SD = 1.12$ ) than the Dutch ‘Hoofdredacteur’ ( $M = 6.25$ ,  $SD = 0.71$ ;  $F(1, 153) = 48.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 8** Means and standard deviations for perceived status of the job (1 = low status, 7 = high status)

	Flemish students			Dutch students			Total		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
English job titles									
Editor-in-chief	5.15	1.15	33	5.22	1.10	47	5.19	1.12	80
Head of communications	6.08	1.08	33	6.24	0.79	47	6.18	0.92	80
Senior communications advisor	5.58	1.02	33	5.88	0.95	47	5.76	0.98	80
Total	5.60	1.14	99	5.78	1.04	141	5.71	1.08	240
Dutch job titles									
Hoofdredacteur	6.40	0.66	39	6.08	0.73	36	6.25	0.71	75
Hoofd communicatie	6.21	0.81	39	6.35	0.60	36	6.27	0.71	75
Senior communicatieadviseur	5.55	1.08	39	5.74	0.94	36	5.64	1.02	75
Total	6.05	0.93	117	6.06	0.80	108	6.05	0.87	225

### 3.5 Estimated gross salary

Participants were asked to indicate the gross salary of the jobs in the job titles on a 7-point scale ranging from 1,000 to 7,000 euros (see Table 9). A repeated measures analysis with *language* and *nationality* as between-subject factors and *job title* as within-subject factor revealed a main effect of *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 12.97, p < .001$ ), a main effect of *language* ( $F(1, 151) = 4.90, p = .028$ ), a main effect of *nationality* ( $F(1, 151) = 10.05, p = .002$ ) and a significant interaction between *language* and *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 5.76, p = .004$ ).

Irrespective of language, Flemish participants ( $M = 3155.40, SE = 97.69$ ) gave a lower estimate of the salary for all jobs than did Dutch participants ( $M = 3657.59, SE = 91.48$ ). Both Dutch and Flemish participants gave a lower estimate of the salary for the job with the English 'Editor-in-chief' job title than for the job with the equivalent Dutch job title ( $F(1, 153) = 12.58, p = .001$ ). The Dutch participants estimated the salary of the jobs with the English job titles significantly differently ( $F(2, 45) = 11.69, p < .001$ ). They estimated the salary of the 'Editor-in-chief' ( $M = 2957.45, SE = 175.68$ ) as lower than of the 'Head of communications' ( $M = 3638.30, SE = 159.28$ ) and the 'Senior communications advisor' ( $M = 3861.11, SE = 183.24$ ).

The Flemish participants ( $F(2, 31) = 7.12, p = .003$ ) estimated the salary of the 'Editor-in-chief' ( $M = 2787.88, SE = 135.94$ ) as lower than that of the 'Head of communications' ( $M = 3212.12, SE = 161.42$ ).

**Table 9** Estimated gross salary (in Euros)

	Flemish students			Dutch students			Total		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
English job titles									
Editor-in-chief	2,787.88	780.93	33	2,957.45	858.65	47	2,887.50	826.67	80
Head of communications	3,212.12	927.28	33	3,638.30	1,091.98	47	3,462.50	1,042.68	80
Senior communications advisor	3,060.61	826.87	33	3,659.57	961.81	47	3,412.50	950.60	80
Total	3,020.20	856.90	99	3,418.44	1,022.29	141	3,254.17	975.64	240
Dutch job titles									
Hoofddirecteur	3,282.05	971.94	39	3,555.56	1,054.09	36	3,413.33	1,014.67	75
Hoofd communicatie	3,205.13	800.64	39	3,805.56	1,190.90	36	3,493.33	1,044.59	75
Senior communicatieadviseur	3,384.62	1,066.61	39	3,861.11	1,099.42	36	3,613.33	1,101.51	75
Total	3,290.60	947.41	117	3,740.74	1,113.81	108	3,506.67	1,052.72	225

### 3.6 Intention to apply for the job

Participants indicated how likely they were to apply for the positions advertised in the job titles in the future and to what extent they would like to work in the positions advertised in the job titles on 7-point scales (see Table 10). A repeated measures analysis with *language* and *nationality* as between-subject factors and *job title* as within-subject factor revealed a main effect of *job title* ( $F(2, 150) = 70.09, p < .001$ ), a main effect of *nationality* ( $F(1, 151) = 18.83, p < .001$ ), and a significant interaction between *nationality* and *language* ( $F(1, 151) = 5.88, p = .017$ ).

The Flemish participants had a lower intention to apply for jobs with English titles ( $M = 4.58, SE = 0.19$ ) than for jobs with Dutch titles ( $M = 3.91, SE = 0.18; F(1,70) = 6.54, p = .013$ ), whereas for the Dutch participants there was no difference in application intention ( $F(1,81) < 1$ ). Irrespective of language and nationality, the application intention was significantly different for all three job titles. It was lowest for the 'Editor-in-chief' job title ( $M = 3.56, SE = 0.13$ ), higher for the 'Senior communications advisor' job title ( $M = 4.82, SE = 0.11$ ), and highest for the 'Head of communications' job title ( $M = 5.39, SE = 0.11$ ).

**Table 10 Means and standard deviations for intention to apply for the job (1 = low, 7 = high)**

	Flemish students			Dutch students			Total		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
English job titles									
Editor-in-chief	3.58	1.51	33	3.63	1.54	47	3.61	1.52	80
Head of communications	5.26	1.24	33	5.80	0.98	47	5.57	1.12	80
Senior communications advisor	4.91	1.23	33	5.22	1.25	47	5.09	1.24	80
Total	4.58	1.51	99	4.88	1.57	141	4.76	1.55	240
Dutch job titles									
Hoofdredacteur	3.23	1.48	39	3.81	1.69	36	3.51	1.60	75
Hoofd communicatie	4.74	1.69	39	5.75	1.19	36	5.23	1.55	75
Senior communicatieadviseur	3.77	1.65	39	5.39	1.33	36	4.55	1.70	75
Total	3.91	1.72	117	4.98	1.64	108	4.43	1.76	225

### 3.7 Attitudes towards English loanwords in general

Participants' attitudes towards English loanwords in general were measured by asking them to indicate to what extent English loanwords must be avoided, and to what extent they pollute and enrich the Dutch language, and sound attractive on four 7-point rating scales. A two-way Anova showed that there was no difference in attitudes towards English loanwords between Dutch and Flemish participants ( $F(1, 151) < 1$ ), nor between participants who had evaluated the Dutch job titles and participants who had evaluated the English job titles ( $F(1, 151) < 1$ ). The interaction between language of the job titles and nationality of the participants was not significant ( $F(1, 151) < 1$ ). One-sample t-tests revealed an above average positive attitude towards English loanwords in general for both the Flemish students ( $M = 4.82$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ ;  $t(71) = 5.58$ ,  $p < .001$ ; see Table 11) and the Dutch students ( $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = 1.16$ ;  $t(82) = 7.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

**Table 11 Means and standard deviations for attitude towards English loanwords (1 = negative; 7 = positive)**

	Dutch students			Flemish students			Total		
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>
English job titles	4.88	1.27	47	4.77	1.27	33	4.83	1.26	80
Dutch job titles	5.12	0.99	36	4.86	1.24	39	4.98	1.13	75
Total	4.98	1.16	83	4.82	1.25	72	4.91	1.20	155



## 4 Conclusion and Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to determine if attitudes towards English loanwords in general and specifically towards English job titles were different in Flanders and the Netherlands, two areas with a shared official language (i.e., Dutch), but with a different sociolinguistic history.

Overall, the findings of our study showed that there were no differences between the Dutch and Flemish participants in their evaluation of the English versus Dutch job titles, or in their general attitude towards English loanwords. For two out of the three individual job titles, 'Head of communications' and 'Senior communications advisor', no differences in attitudes were found between the English and Dutch version. For one of the job titles, 'Editor-in-chief', both Dutch and Flemish participants had more positive attitudes towards the Dutch version than the English equivalent. With regard to intention to apply, the Flemish participants were more negative about the English versions of all three job titles than about the Dutch equivalents, while for the Dutch participants there was no difference in application intention for English or Dutch job titles. The general attitude to English loanwords of both groups of participants was positive.

It can be concluded that English loanwords (in this case, job titles) were not perceived as more prestigious than their Dutch equivalents, contrary to claims in the literature stating that English is a prestige language, and that English words are more prestigious than their native-language equivalents (Kahane, 1992; Latomaa, 1998; Takashi, 1990). There was also no difference in language purism (attitudes to English loanwords in general) between Flemish and Dutch students, contrary to some of the claims in the literature arguing that Flemish people would be more purist and would therefore have more negative attitudes to English loanwords than Dutch people (Cohen, 1996; Geeraerts and Grondelaers, 1999; Van der Sijs, 1996; Zenner et al., 2012; Zenner et al., 2013; Zenner et al., 2014; Zenner et al., 2015). On the basis of the findings of the current study, it can therefore be concluded that, for all measures except application intention, nationality was not a factor influencing language attitudes, despite supposed sociolinguistic differences between the participants at a national level.

The finding that with respect to one measure, i.e., application intention, Flemish participants were more negative about English job titles than about their Dutch equivalents, while for the Dutch participants there was no difference between English and Dutch job titles, is in line with the suggestions in the literature that Flemish people are more purist, more opposed to English loanwords than Dutch people. This may be because of

historical and sociolinguistic differences between Flanders and the Netherlands. Flemish people have a history of struggle against the dominance of the French language and live in a country where Dutch is only one of the official languages (alongside French and German), while Dutch in the Netherlands has no such history of competition with another language and is the only official language (Cohen, 1996; Geeraerts and Grondelaers, 1999; Van der Sijs, 1996; Zenner et al., 2012; Zenner et al., 2013; Zenner et al., 2014; Zenner et al., 2015).

The finding of the current study that there were no differences in attitudes towards English loanwords and (on most measures) specifically towards English loanwords in job titles between Flemish and Dutch participants is in line with suggestions in the literature that such differences no longer exist (Cohen, 1996; Geeraerts and Grondelaers, 1999; Van der Sijs, 1996; Zenner et al., 2012; Zenner et al., 2013; Zenner et al., 2014; Zenner et al., 2015). People in Flanders may no longer be more purist than people in the Netherlands. There are a number of possible reasons for this. People in Flanders may no longer feel the need to protect their language against loanwords, because French dominance is a thing of the past, and, thus no longer relevant. It is also possible that people in Flanders are still purist, more purist than people in the Netherlands, but that Flemish purism is directed only at French loanwords and not at English loanwords.

Another explanation for the lack of differences in attitudes between Flemish and Dutch participants in the current study may be that, currently, both Flanders and the Netherlands are exposed to English to similar extents, which can be taken as evidence for similar attitudes towards English. There is some evidence from corpus analyses that there are no differences in the extent to which the media in Flanders and the Netherlands contain English loanwords and phrases. No differences in proportions of English loanwords were found in person reference nouns in national newspapers (Zenner et al., 2012), catchphrases in national newspapers (Zenner et al., 2014), and loanwords and phrases in a reality TV show (Zenner et al., 2015). In fact, there is some evidence that in some contexts Flemish people are exposed to more English than Dutch people. More product ads with English words were found in the Flemish than in the Dutch *Elle* magazine (Gerritsen et al., 2007) and on Flemish television than on Dutch television (Raedts et al., 2015). These corpus findings indicate that Flemish people are exposed to English at least as much as, if not more, than Dutch people.

The lack of differences in language attitudes may also have resulted from the homogeneity of the Flemish and Dutch participants in terms of education and age, as both groups of participants were students of com-

munication. In addition, the majority of both Flemish and Dutch participants were female. These similarities in personal characteristics may have been more important in determining language attitudes than national characteristics. The fact that participants were predominantly female may theoretically have affected findings, since women and men have been found to have different language attitudes (Brouwer, 1990; Trudgill, 1972). However, Gerritsen et al. (2000) found no gender differences in Dutch participants' attitudes towards English in advertising. Moreover, the preponderance of women in our sample corresponds with the preponderance of female students in communication studies (see e.g. Studievergelijker, n.d.).

The findings of the current study are in line with findings from an earlier study regarding Netherlandic Dutch students' attitudes to the use of English versus Dutch job titles (van Meurs et al., 2007). Both the current study and Van Meurs et al. (2007) indicate that reactions to English versus Dutch job titles are highly dependent on the individual job title. The current study showed that students from the Netherlands evaluated two of the three Dutch job titles as similarly prestigious as English equivalents, while for one job title they evaluated the Dutch version as more prestigious. The earlier study among students from the Netherlands (van Meurs et al., 2007) showed mixed findings for the evaluation of English job titles compared to their Dutch equivalents: some English job titles were evaluated better on attitude to the job and gross monthly starting salary, and worse on attitude to the job title, while for some job titles there were no differences between the English and Dutch versions. These mixed findings challenge the notion of consistency of language attitudes among people with similar sociolinguistic backgrounds.

Our study found a difference in participants' attitudes to English loanwords in general and their attitudes to the specific English (versus Dutch) job titles they evaluated. The general attitudes towards English loanwords were positive, while the attitudes towards one of the specific English job titles ('Editor-in-chief') were less positive than the attitudes to its Dutch equivalent and the attitudes towards the other two job titles ('Head of communications', 'Senior communications advisor') were the same for the English and Dutch versions. Other studies have also found differences in language attitudes towards loanwords and other language attitudes when measured through direct measurements (surveys) and indirect measurements (the matched guise technique) (Hassall et al., 2008; Kristiansen, 2010; Lambert et al., 1965; Sandøy, 2013). It has been suggested that the more direct measurements are more conscious. In this case, therefore,

this would suggest that the directly measured more positive – more conscious – attitudes to English loanwords are not reflected in the indirectly measured – more subconscious – attitudes towards the specific English job titles, which are more neutral or less positive.

The current study showed that, on most measures, there were no differences in attitudes to English job titles between Dutch and Flemish participants, even though the language history and sociolinguistic situation in the two countries is very different. This indicates that nationality and differences in language history and sociolinguistic situation at a national level do not always fully determine language attitudes. Individual level sociolinguistic factors may be more important in determining language attitudes. Earlier studies have pointed out that differences in education (cf. Gerritsen et al., 2000; Lambert et al., 1975; Smakman et al., 2009; Wilson and Bayard, 1992; Withagen and Boves, 1991) and age (cf. Gerritsen et al., 2000) may lead to differences in attitude. In the current study, an attempt was made to keep such factors constant in the participants.

In future research, the relative contribution of differences at national level and at individual level should be investigated. This could be done by comparing the attitudes of participants from countries with different language histories and different sociolinguistic circumstances (i.e., the national level) for participants of different ages and educational backgrounds (i.e., the individual level). Such studies into the combined effect of differences at national and individual level could be conducted for attitudes to English loanwords versus Dutch equivalents in Flanders and the Netherlands, but also in other countries with shared languages, which are or are not in competition with other languages. In Europe, such studies could, for instance, be conducted in French-speaking countries (monolingual France as compared to multilingual Belgium and Switzerland) and in German-speaking countries (monolingual Germany and Austria as compared to multilingual Switzerland).

The current study only took into account participants' nationality but not regional origin. Research has shown that attitudes towards foreign languages, including English, can vary widely across regions within a country (Dörnyei and Clément, 2001). It is possible that attitudes towards loanwords may also differ among regions. For instance, people from the Brussels or Amsterdam area may have different attitudes towards English than in other parts of the country because they are more exposed to English. Future research into the attitude towards English loanwords should, therefore, take into account participants' regional origin.

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## About the authors

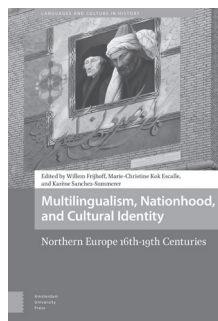
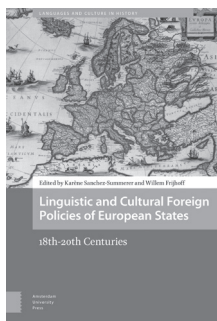
**Frank van Meurs** (corresponding author) and Berna Hendriks are assistant professors in the Department of Communication and Information Studies, Centre for Language Studies at Radboud University, the Netherlands.  
E-mail: f.v.meurs@let.ru.nl

**Dirk Sanders** was an MA student in the Department of Communication and Information Studies, Centre for Language Studies at Radboud University, the Netherlands. He currently works as an Account Manager at a software vendor.



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